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New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 98 *(continued)*

Operational activities for development

Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Children's Fund

The President: This afternoon the General Assembly, in accordance with the decisions taken at its 3rd and 70th plenary meetings, is holding a plenary meeting devoted to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Children's Fund, under agenda item 98, entitled "Operational activities for development".

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) deservedly should be an occasion to take stock of and recognize the many achievements of the Organization. We also need to remember the dedication and selfless service of stalwarts like the late James Grant to the cause of UNICEF. At a time when much of the United Nations is under negative scrutiny, UNICEF has many successes to relate, about changing attitudes, prospects and lives of children.

The protection and welfare of children all over the world, beyond politics and selectivity, must be the continuing purpose of UNICEF. Children are our future. All decisions that we make have an impact on them in some way. Children touch us in many ways that can heal divisions between individuals and between groups and help to build bridges between countries. The instinct to protect and nurture them runs deep in all societies.

It will be a strong indictment of societies and Governments if children continue to be betrayed, the bloom of their promise blighted, their full potentials unmet. We cannot in all conscience maintain that we have done everything within our power to protect the most basic of children's rights — the right to life — if millions of children are being killed violently, face bleak prospects, are conscripted into wars and become victims of endless terror.

If children are to meet their full potential, society must provide them the best chance by fully investing in their education and by inculcating the values of tolerance and pluralism. Resources, including financial resources, must be mobilized in the promotion of the necessary programmes and activities to this end. We must continue to agitate for greater expenditure on education and health care for our young, rather than increased outlay on military weapons. It is distressing to realize that when it comes to the crunch, Governments are more concerned about supporting the rights of buying and selling arms than about protecting the rights of people, including children, to live free from armed conflicts and violence.

UNICEF has done well in identifying and mobilizing resources. However, in a world of depleting resources and the drying up of humanitarian impulses, serious questions arise as to how to resolve the question

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of different institutions competing for contracting resources. While UNICEF has had resources to make changes to children's health and well-being, the absence of resources to tackle the root causes of poverty and marginalization brings into focus contradictions in terms of global commitments and purposes.

A distressing concern with regard to the state of children today is the issue of the exploitation of children. The use of children as actors, targets and hostages in war and violent conflict is so base in its violation of universal values that our conscience should be provoked to the highest degree of moral outrage. Child labour involving the exploitation of children in desperate situations is highly objectionable. Children in these situations are subject to physical, mental and sexual abuse. The crushing effects of poverty and dire conditions are brought to bear on children as victims.

However, that issue should not be turned into the politicization of the rights of children to be used as a weapon against selected countries. The international community must be honest enough to recognize that poverty and the absence of development, in the context of an unjust world, leave millions of children anguished, maimed and orphaned in poor countries. For as long as the inequities between those that have and those that have not are perpetuated, pontifications of goodwill solve precious little.

I believe the international community can find the compassion and tenacity required to protect children all over the world. This requires the sacrifice of time, energy and commercial profit. It also requires a dispassionate acceptance of a global commitment to overcome poverty and marginalization. We must deal with the crisis of our conscience — the disparity between the safety, comfort and numerous material luxuries some children enjoy, and the millions of their contemporaries who face terrible prospects with neither option nor choice.

We are all responsible. We, as parents, adults, Governments and civil society, must play our part in helping make society aware that abuses of children's rights, in whatever form, are unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue. We must reject the notion that the exploitation of children takes place only in the developing world. It happens all around us. Our lifestyles and the choices we make every day all have an impact on someone, perhaps a child, somewhere.

I now call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: It gives me great pleasure to be a part of this United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) family celebration.

Since 1946, UNICEF has been on the humanitarian front line for children. Its accomplishments are a source of pride that is shared throughout the international community. The fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF offers us a unique opportunity. We can reflect on past progress, we can review lessons learned and we can boldly look forward to the future.

UNICEF and its many partners — Governments, national committees for UNICEF, non-governmental organizations and the public at large — have worked in every region of the world. They have given special attention to developing countries. They have brought astonishing improvements to the lives of millions of children. They have also encouraged political responsibility, defined national and local strategies and priorities, mobilized grass-roots participation, provided technical assistance and promoted the rights of women and children everywhere.

On this anniversary, there is cause to celebrate achievements in health, nutrition, education, water supply and sanitation, as well as in the care of children in crisis. Today, UNICEF remains at the front line of conflict that are more numerous and complex than ever before. To meet changing needs, UNICEF's operations include psychosocial care and the rehabilitation of formal child soldiers and child witnesses to atrocities. The principle of first call for children affirms that the protection and development of children should be given priority at all times. UNICEF has worked and has encouraged others to make this principle a reality.

None of these advances would have been possible without the dedication and talents of the UNICEF staff and the resourceful leadership of four Executive Directors: Maurice Pate, Henri Labouisse, James Grant and Carol Bellamy. Above all, let us never forget the many staff members who have given their lives in the service of children. Tragically, the situation of children in many parts of the world remains critical. Inadequate social and economic conditions turn promise into peril. Armed conflicts, exploitation and intolerance turn hope into hatred.

Last month Graça Machel and a group of experts reported to me on the findings of a two-year-long study on the impact of armed conflict on children. They

described a desolate moral vacuum, in which children are victimized, used as soldiers and poisoned by hate and mistrust. We must break that cycle. If we do not, children will be much more likely to repeat the mistakes of their elders.

Children are the key to a better future, a better world. It is essential that children be offered an opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to progress and development in their countries. Leaders are beginning to understand that the gross national product (GNP) is just one measure of growth. Nations that protect and invest in their children's potential are the nations that will progress.

What I have found most encouraging in my discussions with world leaders is that common ground can almost always be found when children's interests are at stake. That is evident in the zones of peace that UNICEF has been able to negotiate. It was manifested in the first ever World Summit for Children, convened in 1990, and expressed in the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF's leadership, credibility and insistence on zones of peace for the protection of children have paved neutral paths through political and cultural minefields. That has enabled the delivery of vaccines and other essential items to children caught up in war. Since the World Summit for Children, more than 150 countries have drafted national programmes of action. Ninety-eight per cent of the world's children live in countries that are now committed to providing them with adequate resources and services. More than 50 Governments have so far reported to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the steps they have taken to fulfil their obligation. Fourteen have written provisions of the Convention into their Constitutions. Thirty-five have amended their laws or passed new child-friendly legislation. Some have created special units to monitor violations of children's rights; others have appointed ombudsmen to speak out on behalf of children.

UNICEF continues to provide technical support to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It was the suffering of children in war that prompted the founding of UNICEF 50 years ago. It is the continuing suffering of children that reminds us how much more we need to do and how important the work of UNICEF is. Let us draw strength from the successes of the past to forge ahead with vigour. Let us bring a better future to the children of the world — our collective future.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Congo, speaking on behalf of the African States.

Mr. Abibi (Congo) *(interpretation from French)*: The commemoration today of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) affords me the great honour of paying warm tribute, on behalf of the States members of the African Group, to an organization whose work lies at the heart of the most noble concerns of mankind. The basic mission entrusted to UNICEF when it was established in 1946, and which its Executive Board reaffirmed last January, is centred on the defence of the rights of children, responding to their needs and providing what they require for their full development.

The work accomplished over these 50 years is tremendous, both legislatively and operationally. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is the cornerstone of the legal edifice built by the international community, is a particularly powerful instrument that defends and protects the whole range of fundamental rights of the child, just as it enshrines the actions of States on behalf of children as legal obligations, and not only as acts of charity or compassion.

The mobilization of political will and material resources to help countries to put children first and to formulate the appropriate policies for children better is basic to the work done by UNICEF, the impact of which in African countries is appreciated by all.

We wish to pay tribute here to the significant progress achieved in Africa by UNICEF, notably in combating malnutrition, disease and illiteracy. We welcome in particular the eradication of smallpox and the remarkable fact that since 1980 20 million children have survived thanks to immunizations, oral rehydration therapy and other simple measures.

A well-deserved tribute must be paid also to the staff of UNICEF, who, by making tremendous sacrifices, exploits every day, giving hope to starving, sick children in areas of conflict — the innocent victims of the madness of adults. These women and men, especially those working in Africa, deserve our admiration and deep gratitude.

I wish also to salute the leaders of UNICEF, such as the late James Grant, whose devotion to the world's children has been the catalyst for the salutary work accomplished by UNICEF over the last 50 years.

Despite the significant results achieved over the past five decades, safety nets for children remain very fragile. As "The Progress of Nations" 1996 issue stresses, many battles still need to be fought and won to attain all the objectives set out in the fundamental mission of UNICEF. Too many children still suffer from malnutrition and diseases and fall victim to disasters, armed conflict and absolute poverty. Too many children still are forced to do things that violate their physical and moral integrity and jeopardize their full development. Too many women and girls still are the victims of social, economic, political and cultural marginalization.

In Africa, many countries face economic situations marked by various difficulties such as a heavy debt burden or a lack of financial resources; this undermines efforts to create conditions that are conducive to the harmonious development of children, to which they have a legitimate right.

The commemoration of this anniversary is thus a good opportunity for us to reaffirm our faith in an organization that, on the international level, constitutes the ideal framework for defending the rights of children and for proclaiming the commitment of States to helping it to continue its sustaining work by giving it the resources commensurate with its mission.

These facts show that the international community still needs UNICEF to help ensure that in the twenty-first century childhood can be a time of hope and promise throughout the world — not a time of misery and marginalization.

The President: I now call on the representative of Mongolia, speaking on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): It gives me great pleasure to speak on behalf of the States members of the Asian Group on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which was brought into being initially to help children affected by the Second World War. Over the years, UNICEF has developed into a reliable provider for the needs of all children around the world and a staunch champion of their interests. UNICEF's multifaceted activities have included the massive struggle waged to control the menace of epidemic diseases in the 1950s; efforts to integrate children's needs into the overall development agenda in the 1960s; the commitment to provide basic social services to children in the 1970s; the campaign for child survival and development in the 1980s; and, in the closing decade of this century, efforts to support Governments in ensuring the protection of the rights of children, in particular those in especially difficult circumstances.

One of the most important highlights in UNICEF's history is the 1990 World Summit for Children, held under the inspired leadership of James Grant, which was crowned by the adoption, at the highest political level, of action-oriented comprehensive goals to the year 2000 to ensure the survival, protection and development of children.

It is heartening to note from the mid-decade review that over 90 countries clearly achieved significant progress in the betterment of living standards of children. The most impressive achievements include, *inter alia*, a dramatic expansion of immunization services, which has resulted in the near eradication of poliomyelitis and dracunculiasis (guinea worm disease). One and a half billion more people were provided with iodized salt, thus protecting some 12 million infants from mental retardation. On an annual basis, 7 million lives are saved due to the reduction in under-five mortality, and the drastic improvement in home management of diarrhoea also saves 1 million additional children annually. In 1995 an estimated 50 million more primary school-age children were enrolled in school than had been in 1990.

UNICEF deserves full credit for attaining these targets. Its national and regional offices around the world, in partnership with Governments and all other actors of society, have helped to improve the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of girls and boys. The Asian States take this opportunity to pay tribute to the entire staff of UNICEF, both at headquarters and in the field, for their untiring efforts to ensure a better future for our descendants.

The commemoration of anniversaries provides us with an opportunity not only to congratulate ourselves on our accomplishments, but also to draw on the experiences of the past in order to meet the challenges of the present and the future. Much remains to be done, since children still face major threats to their survival and development, including malnutrition, lack of access to clean water and sanitation, illiteracy, exploitative labour, prostitution, violence and sexual abuse, and above all, becoming the targets and victims of armed conflicts.

Meeting these challenges will require enhanced international cooperation and genuine political will. The growing political will in favour of children is

demonstrated by the fact that the Convention on the Rights of the Child is now almost universally ratified and is being used by Governments as a framework for national programmes for children and cooperation with UNICEF. The targets set at the World Summit for Children and the rights provided in the Convention are indeed twin pillars that complement each other in promoting and guaranteeing the well-being of children.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate our firm belief that this commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UNICEF will inspire a renewed commitment on the part of the international community to the cause of children through a redoubling of its efforts to attain the objectives set at the Summit and to ensure a better life for every child throughout the world.

The President: I now call on the representative of Poland, speaking on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Matuszewski (Poland): It is a great honour for me to speak today, on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, on the occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Such an anniversary brings thoughts about the roots of the idea of establishing a fund for children and the endeavours of many countries aimed at bringing it about. It gives me special pleasure to mention at this point that Eastern European States were among those countries. We were deeply convinced from the very beginning that the problems of children in their full complexity had to be brought to the highest attention of the international community.

The important mission to respond to the emergency needs of children in the aftermath of the Second World War in Europe unified nations from all over the world and resulted in the foundation in 1946, by the United Nations General Assembly, of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. In October 1953 that organization, under the name of the United Nations Children's Fund, became a permanent part of the United Nations system, with a broadened role to respond to the long-term needs of children living in poverty.

Through all the years since its creation, UNICEF has been working in close cooperation with national Governments, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to meet the needs of children, emphasizing the interrelationship between progress, peace and children's well-being. In 1965, UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its approach, its neutrality and the equal respect that it gave to all children, regardless of their national, cultural, religious and ethnic heritage.

Since then, concrete actions to improve the lives of children have been undertaken. As a result, the average life expectancy of a child increased enormously in just three decades. By 1995, almost 80 per cent of children attended schools, and an equal percentage was protected by vaccines. Child mortality rates were reduced by more than half between 1960 and 1995. Steady progress was made towards meeting the goals set by the World Summit for Children, and the international community demonstrated its commitment to children through the nearly universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children have come to be seen as individuals with fundamental human rights that adult society ought to learn to respect.

The leading role of UNICEF in raising the world's awareness and mobilizing its resources in favour of children is unquestioned. In doing so, the Fund is assisted by national committees in industrialized countries, ambassadors for children, celebrities, parliamentarians, politicians and representatives of non-governmental organizations and business communities from all over the world. However, despite all the good work that is being done, many children are still threatened by malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, exploitation and drug abuse. According to the latest statistical data, over 250 million children around the world work. Many of them are at risk from hazardous and exploitative labour. Millions of children suffer as a result of armed conflicts and natural disasters. All these factors require that further work be done by the international community to strengthen safety nets for children. It is our responsibility to ensure children's basic human rights, including their survival, protection, good health, education and freedom of self-expression.

At this commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the operations of UNICEF, I should like, on behalf of the Group of States of Eastern Europe, to pay tribute to the Fund and its broad range of partners for their commitment, dedication and proven professionalism in standing for children's well-being. We are convinced that in the years to come, under the slogan "children first", with a mission statement having been developed, and in a strong partnership with Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and international agencies, UNICEF will strive with the same impetus to meet challenges that confront children and

their families. While offering our sincere congratulations to UNICEF, we declare our readiness to continue to take an active part in facilitating the development of the child into a free and independent human being.

The President: I now call on the representative of Mexico, speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for me to express, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, our heartfelt recognition for the work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) throughout the 50 years during which it has fostered the well-being of children around the world. Working to help children and the family is, without doubt, one of the main contributions made by the United Nations. The consistent, resolute and effective role played by the United Nations in this area has led to a better life for millions of girls and boys. Without UNICEF, their future would have been grim and miserable. Very often, the imaginative immunization campaigns promoted by UNICEF have meant the difference between life and death for millions of girls and boys throughout the world. UNICEF has been the driving force and the conscience of the United Nations in dealing with the suffering of children.

One of the keys to UNICEF's success has been its unusual ability to evolve and keep pace with world requirements. Initially created to take care of the tragic situation of children who had fallen victim to atrocities perpetrated during the Second World War, UNICEF later became a permanent fund to meet the needs of a large number of girls and boys who had no access to food and basic health and education services. In 1990, thanks to UNICEF's support and the great vision of the Executive Director at that time, James Grant, a new stage in the history of the agency began. The World Summit for Children, convened by the leaders of six countries, gathered together more than 170 Heads of State and Government, and succeeded in placing the development of children at the centre of national and global agendas by establishing specific, time-limited goals and the proper mechanisms to attain them.

UNICEF's support was an essential element in the successful conclusion of the most comprehensive legal document to protect the rights of children. With UNICEF's support, it has been possible to ensure that the Convention on the Rights of the Child has come close to becoming the first legal instrument on human rights to obtain universal ratification. While retaining its great ability for political and financial mobilization and intensive, joint work with Governments, UNICEF, under the excellent leadership of Ms. Carol Bellamy, and with a renewed mandate, is focusing on supporting Government efforts to settle outstanding issues, consolidate the gains that it has already achieved and work more effectively to meet present and future challenges.

As for Latin America and the Caribbean, we are now fully involved in the adoption of measures to achieve the goals established by the World Summit for Children. We have worked together with UNICEF, achieving startling results in certain important areas, such as child immunization. We are redoubling our efforts to reduce the high rates of child malnutrition and maternal mortality, and to take care of the great needs of girls and boys in particularly difficult circumstances. With the resolute support of UNICEF, we are also focusing our attention on creating national legislation to protect the rights of children, in keeping with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A great deal undoubtedly still remains to be done. Despite the efforts of UNICEF, almost 13 million children in developing countries are dying every year due to preventable disease; millions fall victim to the bloodiest armed conflicts and many more to poverty and the plight of being orphaned. This fiftieth anniversary is a unique opportunity to rededicate our hearts and minds, with UNICEF, to continuing our efforts in this common cause and preparing ourselves to resolve problems that still persist.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group would like to reiterate its strong commitment to facing present and future challenges with the most valuable support of this outstanding agency. On behalf of our Governments and the boys and girls of our region, we would like to express our warmest and heart-felt congratulations to the entire UNICEF family on 50 years of tenacity and tireless dedication to the noble cause for which it was created, and that is its *raison d'être*, now and in the future.

The President: I now call on the representative of Canada, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): As Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States, I have the honour of addressing the General Assembly today on the occasion of the fiftieth

anniversary of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). This is a historic event, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to hail an organization that is so important for such a large number of people around the world.

Fifty years ago, the General Assembly transcended political differences to hasten to the aid of children who were so sorely tested by the Second World War. Initially designed as a temporary emergency fund, over the years UNICEF evolved into one of the most important and best known of international organizations. Throughout the world, it brings comfort and hope to children confronting hunger, disease and deprivation. Even more important, UNICEF has managed to place and maintain the problems of children at the top of the international community's agenda. Concrete actions have been taken in order to improve the lives of these children.

(spoke in English)

UNICEF's remarkable successes can be attributed to its many stakeholders, who fervently believe in and support the organization's work. UNICEF's national committees contribute significantly to the organization, and rally many thousands of volunteers to the cause of children worldwide. The private sector and non-governmental organizations are increasingly important partners. The millions of children who participate in the Education for Development initiative are also part of UNICEF. So too are the patrons and recipients of UNICEF's trademark greeting cards, which carry messages of hope, optimism and goodwill throughout the world each year.

The thousands of dedicated employees who have served UNICEF over the years and who continue to perform extraordinary work, often in difficult circumstances, are the heart and soul of UNICEF. Our Governments are vitally important stakeholders, working in partnership with UNICEF offices throughout the world. The many celebrities who have lent their efforts as goodwill ambassadors to support UNICEF's mission are also very much part of UNICEF. Indeed, Roger Moore, Nana Mouskouri and Sharon, Louis and Bram of the Boys Choir of Harlem, among others, have joined us today to celebrate this important event.

People ask whether the United Nations has made a difference. We all know that it has, of course, but in the next breath most of us would point to UNICEF as the most evident example of this reality. The millions of lives saved and children nurtured and educated are but some of the examples of UNICEF's invaluable contribution to making ours a better world.

In all likelihood, there would not be a Convention on the Rights of the Child if it were not for UNICEF. There certainly would not have been a World Summit for Children and its resulting Declaration and Plan of Action if not for the inspirational efforts of UNICEF and its then Executive Director, Jim Grant. UNICEF has made and continues to make an enormous difference. Today as we look back on UNICEF's first 50 years, we can express our pride in its achievements. However, it is also time to look to the future and to the challenges that lie ahead. At this session of the General Assembly, we have had the opportunity to review the implementation of the major goals of the World Summit for Children. We have taken note of the progress achieved, while acknowledging that very much work lies ahead of us. More important, we have renewed our pledge to work with UNICEF and with other relevant bodies towards meeting the worthy goals of the World Summit.

Some day, probably in the far distant future, the world will no longer need an organization such as UNICEF. Preventable childhood diseases will be eradicated and children will no longer starve. Neither will they be abused, exploited or made victims of armed conflict. Families will nurture their children in peace and security. Until that time, however, the world needs UNICEF desperately, and UNICEF needs the international community to do its work. Together we can work to ensure that the future, which rests in our children, can be assured and fostered.

The President: I call now on the representative of the United States of America, the host country.

Mr. Grams (United States of America): My name is Rod Grams. I am a member of the United States Senate, from the State of Minnesota, and I serve on the United States Senate's Foreign Relations Committee. On behalf of the United States delegation, I am delighted to be here today to help commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF). The United States is pleased to be the host country for such a worthwhile organization. To millions of people, especially children, around the world, UNICEF is the leading symbol of the United Nations. This is due to the dedication, vision and tireless efforts of the leadership and the staff of UNICEF, both past and present. This is also due to the cooperative spirit among the many nations involved in UNICEF activities and to

the generosity of the many donors, both large and small, public and private, who have contributed to the cause of the world's children.

I value this opportunity to reflect on UNICEF's accomplishments. The United Nations Children's Fund was founded in 1946 to meet the emergency needs of children in the aftermath of the Second World War. Since then it has provided emergency assistance to children and mothers affected by natural and manmade disasters worldwide. Over the years, UNICEF evolved into a leading development agency, seeking long-term solutions for needy children and mothers around the world. Traditional UNICEF programmes have focused on health, nutrition, education and sanitation. Through immunization, oral rehydration and other activities, millions of children's lives have been saved. UNICEF has come to be seen as the preeminent international advocate on behalf of the world's children, particularly those who are abused, abandoned, exploited or victimized by war and disaster.

The outcome of UNICEF's work is well known: lower child mortality, improved nutrition and health for children and mothers, reduction in disease, improved sanitation, better education for children, and greater overall effectiveness in emergency situations. Relief is being provided and lives are being saved even as we speak here today.

This occasion would not be complete without a tribute to the late Jim Grant for his distinguished service to the United Nations and his extraordinary leadership of UNICEF. As many noted upon his departure in 1995, he was a great man with a singular vision and tremendous heart. He was one of the world's great advocates for children, and on this fiftieth anniversary occasion of the organization that he helped to build, may we remember his life and legacy with gratitude and gladness.

Let me also note that more recently, UNICEF has been a leader in United Nations reform. Management excellence is a top priority at UNICEF, and we would like to acknowledge the accomplishments of the current Executive Director in this regard. Recent initiatives in management, programme planning and organizational structure are helping to forge an even more effective UNICEF, poised to meet the many challenges of the future.

There is still much work to be done to alleviate the terrible conditions of many of the world's children. Even while we celebrate UNICEF's first 50 years, it is reprehensible that children around the world still die every day from preventable causes. We must make the well-being of the world's children a top priority in our international agenda.

As we look ahead, we are confident that UNICEF will take inspiration from its past in confronting the problems of the future. Indeed, we must work together for all children, especially those afflicted by poverty, disease, violence and exploitation. As we have often said, we must learn to put children first — for their own sake and for the world's future. We are coming to the end of one of history's most violent centuries. We must raise our children so that they will do better in the next century than in this one. We must remember that we are raising not just the next generation, but also the parents and grandparents of succeeding generations. We all join hands with UNICEF in its efforts to build a more peaceful and humane civilization on this Earth.

In closing today, I would like to thank all of the staff at UNICEF for their dedication. They are serving a truly noble cause. We all applaud them in their accomplishments, and pledge our support in their continued efforts to improve the lives of children everywhere.

The President: We have heard the last speaker for this plenary meeting devoted to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Children's Fund.

I have been informed by the Ambassador of Romania that a draft resolution on this commemoration will be submitted for consideration on Monday, 16 December, in the afternoon.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to inform delegates that immediately following the adjournment there will be an informal segment devoted to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Children's Fund.

All are invited to attend.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.